OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 85 NO 11 60P

Bi-monthly

The magazine for bisexuals

NEWS

GOSSIP

REVIEWS

LBG Diary

LBG Birthday

The Pink Book

The Horned God

AIDS news and views

THIS ISSUE

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"On you it looks GOOD!"

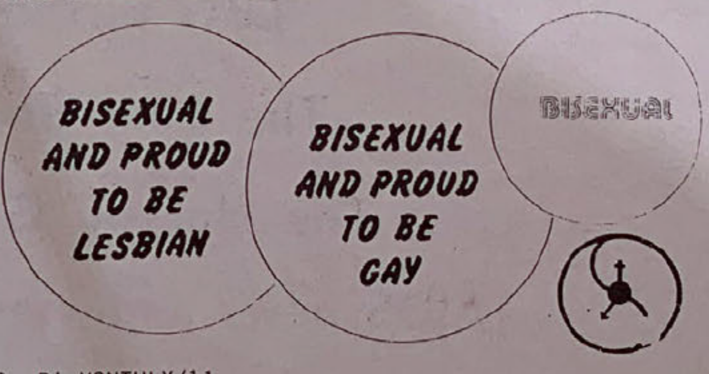
EMBARRASS 63% OF THE POPULATION!!! REMEMBER 37% OF THE POPULATION IS BISEXUAL!!!

The London Bisexual Group has some new mind-blowingly fantastic badges loudly proclaiming the wonders of being bisexual. They come in a variety of psychedelic colours: pink polka-dots on blue, white mottled with blue and pink, and pink/red ripples on white. We also have badges based on the 'BI AND PROUD TO BE GAY' theme with two variations: 'BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE GAY' and 'BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE LESBIAN'.

Go on - BUY ONE!!! If you do, perhaps I will!!!

Badges simply with the word 'BISEXUAL' cost 40p and all others retail at the bargain price of 30p. If you want some, send vast quantities of money either in used, unmarked notes or (if you don't mind giving away your identity) a cheque or postal order made payable to The London Bisexual Group (or L.B.G.), BM BI, London WC1N 3XX.

GO ON, BE A DEVIL, MAKE A CONFORMIST COWER AND A FUNDAMENTALIST FURY!!!!!


BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE LESBIAN
BISEXUAL AND PROUD TO BE GAY
BISEXUAL

NEXT ISSUE

INTERVIEW : Peter Tatchell talks to David Smith.
AIDS : The Impact on Women by Richard Harriman.
MISHIMA : Fascism And The Arts by William Quinn.
PROFILE : F. Scott Fitzgerald by Alan Reid.
JAYNE COUNTY : an All-American Girl tells all!

Contributions in the form of articles, book, film and theatre reviews, poems, news stories and letters reflecting your reaction to this issue should be sent as soon as possible to BI-MONTHLY, BM BI, LONDON WC1N 3XX.

THE REAL ISSUE

TO: LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP, BM BI, LONDON WC1N 3XX.

I enclose cash/cheque/postal order for £__.__

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I wish to subscibe to BI-MONTHLY for six issues starting with issue no. ________

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I wish to donate £___.___ to LBG funds.
Subscription rate : 1 year (six issues) - £4.60p
Single issue : 60p each plus large SAE.

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to:
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RELATED ISSUES

RELATED ISSUES is the start of BI-MONTHLY's very own classified ad's section. To reply to any advertisement, write direct if a name and address is given OR if a reference number is given put your reply in an envelope and write in pencil BI 11 followed by the reference number. Send this envelope to BM BI, London WC1N 3XX.(Your reply envelope should be stamped.) To place an ad., which, for the time being, are free, (commercial concerns should enclose a donation of 20p per line) simply send your copy to BM BI, London WC1N 3XX.

* * *

THE GAY BOOKCLUB (PO BOX 247, London N15 6RW) offers you over 50 British and American books a year at discount prices, including current titles from GMP (formerly Gay Men's Press), Alyson publications and special purchases from other publishers. Subscription is £5 per year or £10 for life and you only need buy 4 books a year to retain membership. All of the books are at least £1 cheaper in the catalogue than in the shops and there is a new catalogue every 3 months. If you join through us, the Gay Bookclub will make a donation to our funds.

* * *

In September I will be moving to a cottage in Hereford and Hay-on-Wye in Herefordshire. Are there any bisexuals anywhere near? If so, please get in touch (via BM BI). I'm going to need all the sympathetic contact I can get. AL. R:B11:01

* * *

Is anyone interested in setting up a Bisexual Group in Glasgow? If so, please contact GBG, PH7, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow.

* * *

The Older Lesbians and Bisexuals Group is a non-scene group that meet for meals etc. in London SW1. telephone (01) 979-0695 (between 6 - 8pm)

* * *

If anyone is interested in setting up a Bisexual Group in Hull, contact Wolfgang, via LBG. R:B11:02

Happy Birthday LBG

On Tuesday September 1st 1981 the LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP took Heaven, Europe's largest gay night-club by storm. The first meeting drew over eighty people and the group became known as the biggest 'gay' group in Britain. Four years on in a new location, The Fallen Angel, the crowds gathered again to celebrate - with a huge strawberry cream gateau smothered in PINK TRIANGLES.

David Burkle

I can scarcely believe it's only four years since we started this group. Remembering all the fascinating and diverse people who have been drawn to the (unsatisfactory yet irreplaceable) bisexual label, you seem to occupy a much more significant portion of my life than four years. HAPPY BIRTHDAY to you all and especially warm greetings to those who've contributed that extra bit of energy to make it all work. We are starting to be noticed and taken seriously, thanks in this last year to the magazine, the two conferences, the London Lesbian and Gay Centre Management Committee and AIDS - and it's heartening to see a parallel emergence of bisexuals in other countries. I'm even more convinced our struggle for acknowledgement is intrinsically linked to the wider fight for a more just and loving society.

Rachel O'Connor

Where would I be without the London Bi-group? Well, I would have few friends who would accept my sexuality. There would be that continual painful feeling, am I the only one who is like this? London can be a very depressing place if you have no friends. If you make friends there is always that 'having to be credible', 'having to be like everyone else'. In the Bi-group I can be myself and be proud of it. The Gay scene for all its liberating, still has that 'having to be like everyone else' about it. In the Bi-group there is none of this conformity, just a freedom. A freedom to express your sexuality how you choose. I hope the group will always respect freedom of sexuality and that I meet a lot more really nice people.

Dudley Cave

I first went to the London Bisexual Group as a visiting speaker, liked it so much that I offered to speak again, and then found I was welcome at meetings even though I am wholly unisexual. I liked the easy atmosphere, being accepted as a person not as a category, the way I could talk to people without them thinking that I had bed in mind and the wide variety of interests of the others there.

The group's main achievement in its short life must be the better understanding by lesbians and gay men of the bisexual situation. For too long it was thought to be the position taken by people who would not accept that they were gay, or by hets who liked to dabble in something a wee bit different, kinky.

Dorothy Clare

What I appreciate most about the London Bisexual Group. It is not straight. It is not separatist. And it gladly accepts diversity. It is a rare society where one can meet gay and bisexual women and men as well as transexuals and transvestites all in one evening and all in one place. The group draws free thinking and liberated individuals. It is the wrong address for male chauvinist piglets wanting to chat up a dolly bird. Several group members regard themselves as bisexual by default, since the Bisexual Group is the only society they fit into. The group is informal and causes no embarrassment. It is non-political for me and it is not a pick-up place.

Matthew Milne

The Bisexual Group first met on Tuesday 1st September 1981. I first came along in July 1983, having seen the write-up in TIME OUT when I came to London that Easter.

During the summer of 81, I first tried coming out. I went to some gay places, not that I was gay you understand. I used to sit on the bus looking at some gorgeous blond man thinking that if I were gay I would fancy him, not that I allowed myself to think I was. After a few days of going to some clubs and pubs, plus a hamfisted attempt to pick a guy up, I returned to the closet I didn't even know I was in.

When I moved down to London, I thought how funny it would be to go down South and become a poof, not that I would of course. Sure I used to read the gay listings in the magazines, yeah I saw some men I fancied, had some rather odd, but definitely erotic dreams, but......

Finally someone asked me in the middle of a moan about a row I was having with a co-worker if I fancied him. I felt myself being turned on by the thought. Suddenly (well during that evening), so much fell into place for me, so many feelings, memories, experiences clicked. When viewed through gay eyes they made sense.

So I crept into Heaven one Tuesday night, scared and worried about how I would fare. I didn't take to the group at first, much I dare say due to my own fears. I'd met a guy I liked and had an affair, I started going to Heaven more regularly, not only on a Tuesday night. Some of what was said about being bisexual made sense to me, I found that rather than going off women I got on much better with them.

As I made friends at the Bi-group, I learned about the Gay world, the conventions of cruising, how to address T.V.s in drag, what poppers are plus what Jeremy Thorpe's boyfriend meant about biting the pillow.

I've been to lots and lots of gay venues, served on the Gay Pride Week committee, helped run the bisexual group and got a tremendous amount out of the gay world, in terms of lovers, friends and fun.

So I celebrate the Bi-groups 4th birthday, the help and support the group has given to so many people and in a way it was my birthday too.....

Public figures

A public opinion poll carried out in August this year by Gallup indicates that 67% of the population disapprove of bisexuality.

The results of the survey were featured in the ITV programme "Twenty Years On – The Sexual Revolution".

Almost 1,100 people were interviewed in several regions of the country.

In contrast to the widespread anti-bisexual feeling, the survey showed that 80% of the population support gay rights, though up to 65% say they would feel uncomfortable in the presence of gay people. 13% of those interviewed even said that homosexuals have too many rights. Other results showed that 65% disapproved of one-night stands and 80% felt that pornography was responsible for sparking off sexual assaults.

It is interesting to compare these results with a similar survey of 1,930 conducted in 1975 for GAY NEWS. Most respondents then felt that the post-1967 law-reform situation was just right. 40% thought that homosexuals should be able to live together openly. But 45% believed that gay people should be barred from professions such as medicine and teaching. Homosexuality was still seen as a largely male, middle- or upper-class phenomenon, and there was a widespread ignorance of lesbianism, bisexuality and transvestism.

WOMAN magazine has published the results of a survey of 5,ooo men. The questionnaire was printed in the magazine last year. It must have seriously limited the variety of men who actually filled it in. Nevertheless, interestingly enough, 8% of the men had had what is coyly called a romantic relationship with another man. And of those 3 out of 5 included making love. The questionnaire didn't ask about any other sort of relationships or good sexual encounters with other men.

(Sources: CAPITAL GAY, WOMAN and COMING OUT by Jeffrey WEEKS.)

Brighton conference

The programme started, after the scoffing, with some games. Sarah led these as we got to know each other's names by throwing a football at each other, committed contortions with a partner as Sarah shouted out 'ear to big toe' etc. and then we all got knotted up a couple of times, co-operatively unknotting ourselves. All dead ace stuff.

We then split into two groups to discuss "Glad to be Bisexual?' The feedback session was pretty low key but I think the groups covered plenty. The general answer seemed to be 'YES' by the way.

After the walk and tea and coffee, the festival moved to its own private cinema (on the stage with the curtains drawn. The video 'Framed Youth' met with chuckles throughout and complete silence after it finished.

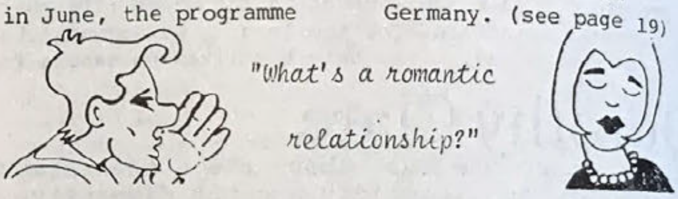
Then we started on a collage, everyone doing their own thing on an enormous sheet of paper, with paint, cuttings, pen and even seaweed. This took up the rest of the afternoon apart from another series of games – some for effect and fun, other for trust.

German conference

A second nationwide meeting of bisexual men and women is to take place in Germany – in Bielefeld – from 1st to 3rd of November. The gathering is organised by the INITIATIVE BISEXUELLER FRAUEN UND MÄNNER.

As at the previous gathering in Breidenstein in June, the programme will include a mixture of 'theory and practice' – discussion workshops, massage, other physical activities, work with sound and even body-painting.

The weekend will cost £20 and early booking is essential. Details from LBG or direct from Germany. (see page 19)


"What's a romantic relationship?"

Embracing bisexuality

"It is ironic that bisexuality will often bring down the scorn of both the heterosexual and the homosexual with equal vehemence." So wrote David Godin in 1971 in ANARCHY magazine. Written in the days when the Women's Movement and the Lesbian&Gay Movements were in their infancy, his article makes many points which are still very relevant today.

He sees a world devoted to destruction, killing and pain. "One has only to read the misery in one edition of any newspaper to see that society has failed...It has failed because it has not recognised the paramount importance of love. Even people of the "free love" generation did not follow their philosophy to its logical conclusion and embrace bisexuality."

David Godin advocates the experience and suggests ways of breaking down inhibitions: "at least let your imagination become totally bisexual and in turn totally loving."

He wants everyone to welcome equally sexual contact with either sex. Sexual frustration and the frustration of love lead only to misery and distorted values.

"An enlightened bisexuality would so galvanise human relationships and conduct as to amount to a true social revolution."

Great interest in the article lies in the episodes David Godin quotes from literature to support and illustrate his argument. He highlights Turgenev's THE TORRENTS OF SPRING, D.H. Lawrence's WOMEN IN LOVE and Brigid Brophy's BLACK SHIP TO HELL. Tennessee Williams, Viktor Frankl, George Bernard Shaw, Wilhelm Reich and the Beatles are all quoted.

And this is only a quarter of the magazine. Other articles included are: Women's Liberation; Wilhelm Reich's Work Theory; and Lesbians as Bogeywomen.

L.B.G. has limited copies which are available at 50p each (20p for the unwaged) plus an A4 s.a.e.

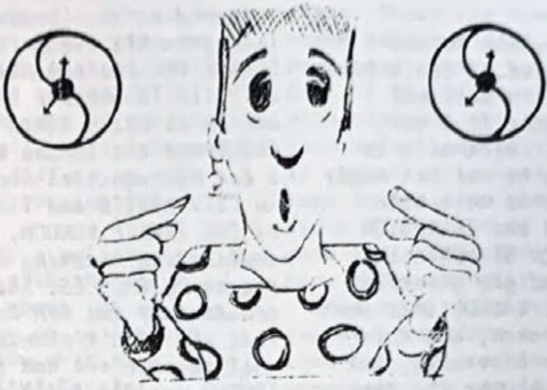
LLGC creche

After many months the creche at the London Lesbian & Gay Centre is now open. Staffed by volunteers the creche runs from 7.30pm onwards on Friday and Saturday nights to coincide with the mixed and women only discos on those nights.

The committee hope to expand the service with more volunteers and increased demand, but are willing to lay on a creche for special events at the centre, by arrangement.

The space has already received several generous donations of equipment but the volunteers are still appealing for children's books, toys and games to make the creche as attractive as possible. Enquiries to the Centre on 01-608 1471

Try stopping and saying "I'm good" . . .



"...*internalised oppression*..."

I am a very excited bisexual woman! I have just discovered a school of thought where bisexuality is welcomed with open arms. There is an organisation of thousands of people all over the world which calls itself a community which thinks bisexual is great! Given that the people involved lesbians, gay men, heterosexuals and bisexuals I think that this is quite a breakthrough.

There are people involved from all walks of life, races, classes, abilities, ages etc. and there is a common awareness of the many oppressions which operate in the world now. Also there is a common aim to get rid of all oppression and an effective system for pooling ideas and learning.

I have just returned from a 4½ day workshop entitled 'Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Liberation' for bisexuals, lesbians and gay men. I was the only person there who identified primarily as bisexual although several others said they were bisexual as well as being lesbian or gay. So maybe you can imagine my surprise when I finally plucked up enough courage to announce to the 46 others that I was pleased that I had several long-term, committed, good, close relationships with people of both genders and a spontaneous cheer went up around the room. Lesbians and gay men cheering my bisexuality - I never would have believed it.

The Liberation workshop tackled issues like when to come out or not, how to build heterosexual allies to help our liberation, getting close to people, building our strength and power as individuals in the world and helping everyone else to build their strength and power too.

A new and fascinating concept to me was something called "internalised oppression". This refers to the ways we have agreed with the nonsense that our oppressors say about us. For example, the oppression says that 'people who are attracted to their own sex are sick, bad, evil etc.' and to some extent we absorb this information. This obviously makes it hard for us to have the courage of our convictions when it comes to bisexual liberation. Try stopping reading this article and saying to yourself for a minute 'I'm good.'............. - if like me you cannot quite believe yourself, it might be some of your internalised oppression getting in the way.

Again, as I got braver at the workshop, I brought up the fact that as a bisexual I didn't think I was as 'right on' as my lesbian lover and I couldn't think of myself as a proper lesbian. I was greeted with the suggestion (from a lesbian) that I could start right now thinking and saying 'I am 100% lesbian' (while remembering that I'm also 100% heterosexual) and forget the rigid rule that no one can be 200% - why not after all?

I think that as soon as we as bisexuals can feel 'properly' lesbian and gay we will be much more effective in working for liberation than while we are hampered by guilt at having hetersexual privilege.

CLARE

If you would like more information about the "community" which organised this, the first ever, gathering of bisexuals, lesbians and gay men, contact Clare via LBG.

Boston renaissance

The BOSTON BISEXUAL WOMEN'S NETWORK is thriving to judge by the variety of activities it has been organising. After the success of the recent conference on bisexuality (BI-MONTHLY No 9), the group is now one of the thirty co-sponsors of 'a gathering of celebration of all gays, lesbians and bi-sexuals' to take place on October 19 and 20. (Is it the first of its kind?)

For the past two years the women have joined the local Gay Pride March. 'Last year, our presence was merely tolerated,' reported one women. 'Quiet acceptance - no boo's, no yea's. But this year the spontaneous cheers of welcome and support along the way were overwhelming, both in number and emotion.'

The group puts a lot of work into arranging local meetings with a variety of emphases; introductory meetings; General Meetings to discuss issues of importance to the bisexual community; study groups covering a range of feminist topics from the political to the erotic; support groups; work-nights; beach days; bicycle trips and countless parties.

The latest monthly newsletter, produced by the group, contains letters and reports about what is happening in this bubbling area of the bisexual community, as well as personal accounts of what's happening in the women's own lives. There's a fascinating extract about bisexual women and feminism, taken from the reputedly excellent book NO TURNING BACK: LESBIAN AND GAY LIBERATION IN THE 80'S. And the newsletter announces the formation of the Bisexual Anthology Collective, with the aim of 'de-mystifying and validating bisexuality and the bisexual identity. The Collective is looking to collect diaries, short stories, essays, poems, drawings, music and lyrics and photos, including photos of sculpture from people of all colours, classes, backgrounds, ages, sexual preferences and physical challenges.

A recent highlight in the Network's programme was the Second Annual Bisexual Retreat, held in a rambling old country house. A weekend of discussions about relationships and relating to men and women, sexism, monogamy and non-monogamy bisexuality and spirituality.... Massage, games guided fantasies, vegetarian food and 'sweat lodges'. One over-joyed woman sums up the weekend 'I feel like I've tapped into a wonderful network of renaissance people who are bound and determined to change the way we view ourselves and our sexuality.'

DAVID SMITH

Did you hear . . ?

GORE VIDAL when asked if the first person he had slept with was a man or a woman replied,"I don't know I was too polite to ask."... There is a Bisexual Women's Network in NEW YORK...and there is a new bisexual group in BERLIN which meets informally in members' houses...DAVID BOWIE on how he met his wife: Angela and I knew each other because we were both going out with the same man...CAMDEN and ISLINGTON Libraries have taken subscriptions to BI-MONTHLY... PROGRESS WITH NALGAY, the lesbian and gay group of the Local Government Officers Union, NALGO. Last year a bisexual woman, who is a social worker, was told that NALGAY's conference was not for bisexuals. But this year there actually was a workshop on the theme of bisexuality...Quote! Ever since I had that interview in which I said I was bisexual, it seems twice as many people wave at me in the streets! ELTON JOHN ...At the Second International Gay Youth Conference in DUBLIN in July, Hilda from Belfast was heard to say: There is one thing that annoys me. I don't mind someone being bisexual, that doesn't worry me, but the majority of the folk here are bisexual, and it's supposed to be a GAY conference. There are lots of other conferences I can go to, and surely there's enough gay youth...NOT GAY! NOT STRAIGHT! That's how Stephen Hayter describes his new club - 16 Berkeley - at 16 Berkeley St., LONDON W1. The building is an old opera house, the decor HIGH CAMP VICTORIANA. Opening soon... The Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement is having a session on Bisexuality at their Winter Conference on December 21st...FRIEND, the lesbian and gay counselling and befriending organisation, is running a workshop on the special needs of bisexuals in the programme of its national conference for workers and helpers. Lots of bisexuals go to the FRIEND centre in COVENTRY and all bisexual and lesbian women are welcomed at the London FRIEND centre (274 Upper St. Islington N1) every Thursday evening at 8.00pm... SQUARE PEG was nominated as one of 200 FAB THINGS by CITY LIMITS because between its glossy pages bisexuality is not a dirty word...The LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP and the London Women's Bisexual Group have had a lot of enquiries recently following extra publicity in CITY LIMITS and TIME OUT...GERMAINE GREER, author of THE FEMALE EUNUCH, came out as bisexual - by implication - during CHANNEL FOUR's religious affairs programme,CHOICES. She said that she had been constant to the men and women who had loved her and that she didn't abandon her lovers - male or female - just because she had found a new one...MYTHS AND TRUTHS was the title of a discussion about bisexuality organised by KENRIC recently. KENRIC is a lesbian organisation with an emphasis on social activities. (Write to KENRIC, BM KENRIC, London WC1N) ...RITA MAE BROWN, lesbian feminist novelist, author of RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE, ex-lover of MARTINA NAVRATILOVA, has written a new novel about a heterosexual woman who disguises herself as a man to join her husband in the American Civil War...there are bisexual stirrings at EXETER University. Watch this space!... JOAN COLLINS said that AIDS and HERPES are plagues sent to punish us for abusing our sexual freedom... FAYE PRESTO will be appearing on one of the three nights of bisexual, lesbian and gay entertainment at the SHAW THEATRE, Euston Road, London. Proceeds will go to the GAY'S THE WORD Defence Fund... And finally, Capital Radio's ANNA RAEBURN received a call on the air from a man who is engaged and also has a boyfriend. She managed to talk to him for five minutes without once mentioning the possibility of a positive BISEXUAL LIFESTYLE!!!

Bi-days

THE GAY BOOK OF DAYS by Martin Greif, W.H.Allen, £6.95, 223 pages

A lovely coffee table book nicely illustrated, this light and informative work gives biographical details of sexually unconventional people from art, history, politics and entertainment. It's a great conversation piece and as an appetiser here are a few of those who constitute OUR history.

Evelyn Waugh
Writer - born Oct. 28, 1903 in London.
Author of the wildly successful book BRIDESHEAD REVISITED.

Katherine Mansfield
Author - born Oct. 14, 1888 in Wellington, New Zealand.
Married to John Middleton Murry. When writing about herself she considered herself a lesbian.

Jean Jacques Regis de Cambaceres
Revolutionary - born Oct. 18, 1753 in Montpellier, France.
One of the principal legislators of the Code Napoleon, he was responsible for legalising consenting relations in private between men.

car Wilde
wit - born Oct. 16, 1856 in Dublin.
Green carnations - Bosie - Reading Gaol - THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST - PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY - Wasn't he married too? - He wrote THE HAPPY PRINCE for his sons.

William Beckford
Gentlemen - born Oct. 1, 1760 in Fonthill Gifford, Wiltshire
He dedicated his life to spending the huge fortune he inherited as a child, travelling widely in Europe. His wife died young, leaving him an heir. He was exiled for many years after a scandal involving the young and beautiful William Courtenay. He created the astonishing Fonthill Abbey which had a vast collection of art treasures. He gave his male servants such names as Miss Butterfly and Bijou. He wrote VATHEK, a wild oriental tale and shared the last forty years of his life with an Italian 'companion'.

Sophocles
Philosopher - born Nov. 6, 495 BC in Ancient Greece.
Living in a society where bisexuality was a desirable norm for men, he wrote OEDIPUS REX.

Richard Burton
Actor - born Nov. 10, 1925, Wales. Elizabeth Taylor's most famous husband. He said: I was once a homosexual but it didn't work.

Catherine Tozer Coombes
Decorator - born Nov. 18, 1834 in Axbridge, Somerset.
Married to Tom Coombes - they worked as a team - she changed her name to Fred and wore men's clothes. Then she fell in love with one Nelly Smith and lived with her and Tom, until arrested by the police after complaints from Nelly's parents. When released from prison she changed her name to Charlie Wilson to settle down with her new lover, Anne.

Harold Nicolson
M.P., Diplomat and writer born Nov. 21, 1886.
He and his wife, Vita Sackville-West, lover of Virginia Woolf, had an open bisexual marriage and their main joint venture was the design of the gardens at their home, Sissinghurst Castle in Kent.

Emlyn Williams
Writer - born Nov. 26, 1905, Wales.
Happily married with children, his two volume autobiography, GEORGE and EMLYN recount gay New York in the twenties and make fascinating reading.

Winston Churchill
Politician - born Nov. 30, 1874 at Blenheim.
He once went to bed with Ivor Novello 'to see what it was like'. And how was it? 'Musical'.

Tender is the night

by Susan Winter

The great HTLV3 debate will undoubtedly hot up in the very near future due to VD clinics becoming more able to offer facilities and the fact that all donated blood for transfusions is to be screened.

The question should remain however one of personal choice. How is one to get sufficiently well-informed when the medical profession itself differs in opinion and admits to large gaps in its current knowledge.

What does the test mean? Certainly a positive test must be taken to mean contact with the virus. Statistics have shown to date that about 10% of people who show a positive result go on to develop AIDS. Only further research will show what this means for the remaining 90%. Immunity? Carrier status? Both?

My personal view and therefore my decision is against taking the test. My reasons are simple. A positive result would require me to modify my sex-life accordingly. I have done that anyway, thus reducing the possibility of putting others and myself at risk. If one's life is so structured anyway that you live monogamously then of course continuing to do so would be very convenient.

AIDS is a health issue, not a moral one. Therefore there should be no pressure on people to conform to a "new" morality. If non-monogamy is your chosen way then it should remain so. Until such time as a "cure" is found and a vaccine developed, a modification of lifestyle is required solely for one's health and for that of one's partners.

I am a bisexual woman who prefers bisexual people as my sexual partners. This means that I would be "at risk" primarily from my non-monogamous male lovers. Sexually active women who wish to avoid pregnancy have long lived with a need for safe sex. A simple extension of the principles involved can be imagined. Safe sex need not be boring. Being close and tender can be fun.

The idea of safe sex has not had a stimulating press. There are however precedents in which women have modified their sexual behaviour, as mentioned above, in order to avoid conception. Most of the bisexual women I know prefer to sleep with bisexual men and consequently are at risk from infection. Leaving aside other possibilities, if you actually want to screw, the obvious step to take to minimise the chance of transmission of the virus is the use of condoms, but it is often the case that men, used to women being on the pill, have never actually used barrier contraceptives.

I've been using Durex for 8 years now and I learnt a lot from a partner who had a very positive approach to their use and I've brought this experience to use in other relationships.

There are however practicalities that have to be considered concerning the use of condoms.

Don't just throw a packet at your partner (remember it's you who wants to get laid) putting it on should be part of love-making, something enjoyable. Try putting it on for him. In fact presume he's never even used them before.

Choose a timely moment during intercourse to make sure it's still in place and afterwards don't always leave it up to him to remove and dispose of it.

Buy in bulk (the French only sell them in packets of 25) and always carry them around with you. You never know...

Don't use the novelty condoms from sex shops. They are not strong enough and some aren't even sold as contraceptives. I always used plain ordinary Durex and in eight years I've only had one rip on me.

My intention here has been to urge a dialogue and to air the questions that need to be aired. The women's movement opened such a dialogue over recent years as more and more women began to voice dissatisfaction with their sex-lives. It may be that your transition to safe sex will not occur overnight, but remember HTLV3 is not highly contagious. It's main methods of transmission are via blood and semen i surely this leaves plenty of room for pleasure?

Positive news

"I'm making changes." This is the new catch phrase of BODY POSITIVE - the social and support group for people who have the AIDS virus HTLV3.

A lot of us are going to have to make changes, if we are to safeguard our health. The number of actual AIDS cases in this country has, as predicted, doubled over the last six months, rising to 206 including 114 deaths. It is estimated that there are 10,000 HTLV3 carriers in Britain, mostly in London, the vast majority being bisexual and gay men.

Mass screenings of blood in STD clinics and blood transfusion centres which were set to begin in October, will highlight the need for support for those faced with the uncertainty of what being HTLV3 positive means.

What is available now? The Terrence Higgins Trust runs four-week courses of counselling and advice given by professional people. And for those who do develop AIDS, the Trust through its volunteers aims to provide continuing support and help.

"Did you hear the one about the guy who thought safe sex was strictly for the birds?"

NEWSWEEK magazine ran two very touching stories One about a very healthy looking AIDS sufferer welcomed home and looked after by his parents. The other about a very ill man abandoned by friends and family because he has AIDS. The moral is clear.

The first ever publication about coping with the problems of being antibody positive has been produced by the AIDS Helpline in Sussex. It is available with s.a.e. from PO Box 17, Brighton BN2 5NQ

A new AIDS support group has started in Reading. And BODY POSITIVE, making 'a positive committment to health', runs a disco every other Tuesday at the Market Tavern at Vauxhall in London. The event is called CHANGES and it's not just for people who are antibody positive. It is for everyone modifying their sexual habits and it's said to be one of the friendliest discos in the capital.

Getting down to the practicalities of encouraging safer sex, an increasing number of gay pubs and clubs are installing condom machines and planning ways of promoting their use.

Hot and sensible

HOT LIVING: EROTIC STORIES ABOUT SAFER SEX edited by John Preston, Alyson/GMP, £5.95, 191 pages.

I don't know where the idea comes from that things which are good for you are boring, but if the concept of Responsible Sex is to become part of our sexual practice, and the falling incidence of sexually transmitted diseases shows that this has already started to happen, without degenerating into a justification for unliberated lifestyles - monogamy is no guarantee - then we better make sure that Sensible Sex comes in very attractive packages.

Fear is a great supporter of the status quo. And morality is always called upon when the people in the white coats who like to link their 'ethics' with our experience need to find another area of human existence for their deviance-definitions. We might not have Jews but at least we have homosexuals. And whereas previously they were only poisoning the minds they, or rather the bisexuals, under the guise of normality and acceptance, are now poisoning the health of the nation. What Goffman calls stigmatization and Szasz psychiatric classification is now being used to isolate those members of the community who are most in need of its protection. People should be warned.

A plague is defined and scapegoats are found. 'When a city suffered from plague... an ugly or deformed person was chosen to take upon himself all the evils which afflicted the community. He was brought to a suitable place, where dried figs, a barley loaf, and cheese were put into his hands. These he ate. Then he was beaten seven times upon his genital organs with squills ... while the flutes played a particular tune. Afterwards he was burned on a pyre ...' (Frazer, The Golden Bough, p.579.)

As with other contagious diseases in the past, containment might best be achieved by modification of social behaviour, as indeed was the case with tuberculosis, long before a medical remedy became available.

And the alternative must be pleasurable, and available. An awareness amongst lovers. A new collection of erotic short stories for gay men might stimulate some change here. HOT LIVING, was commissioned by John Preston from well known writers in the US to feature safer sex in the light of the threat of The Disease, to 'eroticise' the factual information that is available to us through the Terrence Higgins Trust, and to enable us to, as the editor says in his introduction, 'regain some of the sense of empowerment and validation that sex gives us'.

"...a good idea," someone remarks in Toby Johnson's 'Friends', "would be for us to learn to have sex with friends", a qualitative change from compartmentalised consumerism to solidarity and friendship? An eroticisation of the whole body? And might it, as is tentatively happening in the United States already, not lead to signs of solidarity from society at large? A new concept of sexuality might prove politically much more useful, and much more subversive, than we expect. People who are truly sexually satisfied are very difficult to oppress.

Phil Andros' story stuck in my mind until long after I had finished reading the book. It's about a disabled ex-hustler. And Kinsey, and nipples.

All royalties from the book go to the Gay Men's Health Crisis.

ANDREAS REDA

AIDS aid

Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick and Gladys Knight are to release a single, the proceeds of which will go to AIDS research. 'THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR' was written by Burt Bacharach and Carole Bayer Sager and will be released on October 18. There's a video to go with it too. Stevie Wonder and Dionne Warwick performed the song at a major AIDS benefit in Hollywood. Liz Taylor who compered the show reminded the audience that if they lived in any major western urban centre and did not already know someone affected by AIDS they probably soon would. Fighting back tears Liz Taylor introduced Burt Lancaster who read a message of thanks, love and commitment from Rock Hudson. It is reported that over one million letters of support have been received by Rock Hudson since the news that he is suffering from AIDS became public.

We note with interest that these stars are repaying their dues to the bisexual and gay community which has supported their careers over the years. And we look forward to similar events being planned in the U.K.

READING MATTERS

A room with a view

To most people GIOVANNI"S ROOM is the classic bisexual novel by James Baldwin. To the residents of Philadelphia it is the biggest Lesbian and Gay book store in the world.

Now in it's eleventh year, GIOVANNI'S ROOM has six staff and twenty five volunteers. The shop stocks more titles than any other Lesbian and Gay book store. They produce a wide variety of comprehensive catalogues which cover nearly every book of interest to Gays that is still in print.

Bisexuality is by no means ignored in the current catalogue, although they do not treat it separartly. Here are a few books from the Gay men's fiction list.

THE FINDING OF DAVID by Robert Scott (GPNY). A first novel about a gay man and his closeted bisexual lover in 1976 in Chicago. When the first is arrested, the second's career is on the line.

JUST HOLD ON by Scott Bunn, (Dell) A short novel written for teens. A high-school triangle; two boys and the girl-friend of one of them. GAY'S THE WORD bookshop have said they will order these two. Let's hope they get through Customs.

SOMETHING IN COMMON by Robert Rodin is considered too expensive at $16.95. But it is a 'deeply felt novel that explores the fascinating and often painful bisexual arena. Forty-year-old Joel Stern walks a precarious line: married for sixteen years to Cath, his world is turned upside down when he learns of the death of his former lover and law-school room-mate, Ted.'

And from the women's lists:

MOVEMENT by Valerie Miner (Crossing Press). This novel captures ten years in Susan's life. We witness the growth and rebirth of a woman from draft-dodgers wife to committed feminist.

And a real classic - HIGH COST OF LIVING by Marge Piercy which is published here. It's the story of a sexual triangle involving a lesbian Karate expert, a gay male student and a high-school girl with an over-protective mother.

For further information write to:
GIOVANNI'S ROOM, 345S 12th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, U.S.A.

Hanging for sodomy

BYRON AND GREEK LOVE: HOMOPHOBIA IN 19th CENTURY ENGLAND by Louis Crompton, Faber, £17.50, 419 pages

How often do you pick up a book and find forty-five references to bisexuality in the index. BYRON AND GREEK LOVE has that many, and it doesn't mean that the word 'bisexuality' is mentioned precisely forty-five times in the text. In what seems a peculiarly American way, Louis Crompton consistently refers to 'gay and bisexual people'. And although this a literary/historical work, he comments on the relevance of his material to today's gay and bisexual community.

On one level this is an in-depth study of the poet, Byron's bisexuality. Using previously unpublished letters and deciphering hilariously complicated codes used by Byron and his friends to write about homosexuality, Louis Crompton charts Byron's romantic and sexual encounters with boys and men - from boarding school to his death whilst working for the Greek resistance against the Turkish occupation of their country.

He brings together all the scattered details about Byron's friends, his sexual odyssey to Greece and Albania, his involvement with Lady Caroline Lamb, his marriage, his incestuous relationship with his sister, his role as a radical peer, his exile in Italy.

But this is only one strand of an enormously rich book, which took years of research. Professor Crompton (who teaches at the University of Nebraska) includes a wealth of detail about Greek literature, philosophy and culture which were being rediscovered in Byron' time. Byron was one of the first to faithfully translate Greek works in praise of homosexuality - into English, a language which had only words like 'sin' and 'abomination' to describe it.

The Georgian era was a time of terrible persecution of gay and bisexual people. And this homophobia wasn't just stirred up by religious bigots quoting the precedent of Sodom and Gomorrah. One of the fascinating aspects of Louis Crompton's book is his searching analysis of how different strands of prejudice and antipathy become interwoven and support each other.

While oppression boomed in England, anti-sodomy laws were repealed in France following the Revolution. Consequently, homophobia in England became a popular extension of anti-French feeling whipped up by opponents of the Revolution, and it was an integral part of the xenophobia generated by an establishment at war with Napoleon.

The acceptance of homosexuality by the Italians made them the target of accusations of degeneracy from the Protestant churches as they encouraged anti-Catholic feeling.

(The role of gay and bisexual people as scapegoats is ever-changing but ever-present. We now have to cope with being accused of having sole responsibility for spreading a killer disease.)

In Byron's time the penalty for sodomy was hanging or pillorying. Contemporary accounts graphically convey the horror of being mobbed and pelted with rotten vegetables, offal, dead dogs and cats and the refuse from slaughter houses by crazed crowds numbering many thousands. The victims were lucky to survive with bruised, swollen and disfigured bodies and faces. Many died in terrible pain.

This book is at once very moving, informative, funny and fascinating. I applaud the dedicated research and the resultant enormous contribution to the documentation of our history.

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Lord Byron.

I wrote to Louis Crompton to say how much I enjoyed the book and to put a few general questions. Here is an extract from his reply.

'I was deeply touched by your response to BYRON. I have been especially curious about English reactions. To hear that an English bisexual valued it was extremely gratifying.

'Bisexuality is getting less attention here now than a few years ago when there was a small flurry of (rather superficial) popular books. I'm not aware of any response quite as brutal as that you describe in London. (i.e. the banning of bisexual groups from the London Lesbian and Gay Centre.) People fail to see that there is an important question of identity involved. Kate Millett continues pointedly to identify herself as bisexual, so does Gore Vidal.

'As for other studies I can't off hand think of any quite like BYRON. Colette would make a fascinating topic and so would Cellini.

'As for the future, I've begun a history starting with the Greeks. It will dwell on the horrors of persecution in the 15th-18th centuries and end, if I live so long, about where the Byron book begins.'

I wish him a long life!

DAVID SMITH

Utopian dimension

THEORIES OF HOMOSEXUALITY by Martin Dannecker, GMP, £1.95, 123 pages.

Martin Dannecker is renowned in Germany as one of the co-writers of a ground breaking study of gay men, THE AVERAGE HOMOSEXUAL published in 1974. Ideas expressed in that book are picked up again here, as he delicately and eloquently weaves the argument that the real nature and value of homosexuality are intangible dreams. They can hardly even be guessed at by studying homosexual people as we are today. We are hemmed in by laws and by the implications built into social organisation.

Surveying the theories of psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, biologists and law-reformers, Dannecker everywhere uncovers the hidden assumptions about 'normality' which keep us in our place - a group apart.

Dannecker's arguments have enormous implications for bisexual people in particular. He quotes Freud from 1915: 'From the point of view of psychoanalysis the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women is also a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature.' Freud's demand is still to be met. And, whilst acknowledging gay and bisexual people's legitimate mistrust of thoerists, Dannecker, as a psychologist, is keen to set a new and acceptable agenda which will take on board Freud's idea, come to grips with the relatively unexplored area of suppressed homosexuality and aim for the 'utopian dimension' of a liberated sexuality for all.

D.S.

BI-SCI-FI

THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, Ursula LeGuin (Futura, £2.50)

Written in 1969 this is one of LeGuin's best known works In one sense the story is a classic 'first contact' plot. Man has long ago colonised the Galaxy and some catastrophic war has severed the links between branches of the human race. An alien envoy attempts to explain his mission to the political leaders of the planet Winter. He gets caught up with intrigues, nationalistic fever, is rejected, sentenced to death, escapes and ultimately triumphs.

Winter is a frozen planet, inhabited by a race of androgynous human, the Genthians. Probably the result of genetic engineering they have a 26-28 day cycle. For the first 18 or so days they are 'somer' (sexually inactive), but then the pituitary gland starts to work and around the 22nd-23rd day the individual enters 'Kemmer' (estrus). During this time the person is still incapable of coitus yet is subject to a tremendously powerful sex drive. But if the Kemmering does not meet another in the same state, the phase will pass with no movement away from androgyny.

When two people in kemmer meet, then a reaction will take place and one of the two will develop a predominance of male hormones, and the other female hormones. The genitals will engorge or shrink accordingly and the final state of Kemmering - sexual potency - will be reached, lasting between two and five days. Should the individual in the female role become pregnant, then the hormonal activity continues for the 8.4 month gestation period and the 6-8 month lactation period as the individual remains female.

Thus LeGuin is able to mirror our own society using institutions like 'vowing kemmering' (monogamous marriage) and orgies of the Kemmering Houses to contrast marriage and the bath houses.

Into this society comes the Envoy,Genly Ai, a coloured diplomat sent to establish contact. And the book relates his experiences on this world where 'there is no division...into strong and weak halves...owner/ chattel...dominant/passive...', where 'there is no unconsenting sex, no rape...they kill each other readily by ones and twos; seldom by tens and twenties; never by hundreds and thousands, there is no war.

References to bisexuality abound. We are advised, on meeting a Genthian, not to act as a bisexual normally does, casting the person into the role of being male of female. The Envoy is considered to be a pervert for his permanent maleness.

As a science-fiction story the book is award-winning. And as with most female authors LeGuin avoids the technology and traps of 'Star Wars' to concentrate on relationships and societies to produce a thought provoking story about sexual politics.

Having read the book again since coming out, I found it made much more sense. A good book to get.

MATT MILNE

Kinflicks

KINFLICKS by Lisa Alther, (Penguin) (£3.95, 576 pages)

Anyone who hasn't yet read Lisa Alther's brilliant first novel has a treat in store. KINFLICKS was published in paperback in 1977 and became a bestseller. It is a serious work which will all the same have you laughing out loud with its quick and quirky wit and sharp satire. KINFLICKS is intelligent and humane, very funny and very moving.

Ginny is the central character with strong roots in the deep South of the US. Her return home to her dying mother sets the scene for the two threads of the book: the present day, as Ginny, in the first person, explores the subtleties and confusions of her relationship with her mother; and Ginny's past unravelled in the third person, an odyssey of self-discovery. The separate narratives are taken up in alternate chapters and follow through to form a carefully constructed and interwoven whole.

"My family has always been into death" must rate as one of the best opening sentences. Ginny's crazy parents share a pathological preoccupation with death and disaster which lurk in wait of the unwary. Her high-school days in a small town are colourful with the hyped up institutional rituals and the botched up encounters of sexual experience. Ginny's horizons open up with a University place. She flings herself into the world of intellectual abstraction, only to land with equal conviction in an earthy relationship with radical, lesbian feminist, Eddie, who saves her from the "moral paralysis" of cold intellectualism.

She leaves university in disgrace to join the "Soyabean People" as Eddie's lover, exploring new ideas and new intensities of sexual experience. Eddie is larger than life, fervently pursuing worthy but confused political ideals - a violent child of violence. Ginny's life in the Stark Bog commune features some inspired characterisation; such as the sexually voracious Laverne who, unwittingly, almost achieves the ultimate orgasm through an electrical fault in her well-used vibrator.

A dramatic turn in the plot sees Ginny take on a new guise as respectable suburban housewife to the utterly straight and devoted Ira. She has a child and tends a house and even joins the Tupperware circuit - perfect material for Alther's satirical wit. But safe respectability is short-lived and the edifice crumbles when Ginny finds herself in an extra-marital mystic union with cosmically conscious Will. Well, whatever it is, on the strength of his impression, Ira considers it grounds for divorce.

And where then? Who knows how many people we can be if we keep our minds and bodies open to new experience? Ginny meets life and death head on but is ultimately faced with the question of where all this self discovery leads. Where does the individual belong?

VICTORIA

Dregs of love

CORYDON by Andre Gide, GMP, £3.95, 135 pages.

Andre Gide considered CORYDON to be his most important book. It is a defence of homosexuality in the form of a conversation between a tolerant sceptic and a staunch protagonist. First published in 1925 some of the arguments are rather quaint, and the theory put forward ignores the individuality and value of women in their own right. The book's historical value is immense, and many of the ideas are still fresh, relevant and as yet by no means widely accepted. We often hear of Alfred Kinsey and his concept of a spectrum of sexuality. But Gide was writing about it twenty years earlier. 'Between exclusive homosexuality and exclusive heterosexuality, there is every intermediate shading. But most people simply draw the line between normal love and a love alleged to be *contra naturam*, and for convenience's sake, all the noble or tragic passions, all the beauty of action and thought are put on one side, and to the other are relegated all the filthy dregs of love...'

DAVID SMITH

Breaking the mould

The study of bisexuality is at the spearhead of a movement to break the mould forced onto sexuality by scientists and social commentators. This is the view of Philip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz of the Department of Sociology at the University of Washington, U.S.A.. They feel that the way scientists and the population view sexuality can be transformed by the proper consideration of bisexuality.

As far back as 1948, Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues found that up to 37 percent of the population of the United States had had some sort of homosexual experience but that only four percent were exclusively lesbian or gay. More recent studies have confirmed these figures but the subject of bisexuality has rarely been considered for its own sake. In fact it has been banished to the fringes of sexuality and treated only as a curiosity, in the same way as androgyny, transvestism, transexuality, hermaphroditism, celibacy and asexuality. And consequently bisexuality is seen as the domain of cranks and eccentrics.

As Blumstein and Schwartz tell us, bisexuality does not fit in to the stereotyped view of sexuality. We are either male or female, masculine or feminine, heterosexual or homosexual. "Our cultural logic holds that it is almost impossible to have only some homosexual feelings. The idea is seldom questioned that a single homosexual act or strong homosexual feelings reveal the 'true person'...We have no imagery for partial states of being...."

And yet even a cursory study of bisexuality throws serious doubt on traditional notions that sexual orientation and sexual identity are unchanging and unchangeable. Blumstein and Schwartz found that people could change these without even being aware that it was possible. Childhood and adolescent experiences were by no means the final determining factors. These findings have enormous implications for an argument which has been raging in the world of psychology and sociology for over a century.

Freud first came up with the idea of bisexuality as a natural state, but there has always been disagreement about whether homosexuality is biological or at least determined in childhood or whether it can be 'acquired' at any time in the course of one's life. Law-reformers, quoting psychologists, most often stressed the notion that homosexuals were 'born like that' and 'couldn't help it' and thus it was inhuman to persecute them. To admit that sexual orientation is not fixed, invites the demand that it should be made as difficult as possible for people to 'become homosexual'.

Consequently the concept of bisexuality was often deliberately ignored.

In their study of 156 bisexual women and men, Blumstein and Schwartz were interested in four major questions. First, is bisexuality a continuous, preordained theme throughout a person's life, or does it emerge and change with circumstances? Second, what are the complex factors which lead to a person's self-definition? Third, which circumstances are most conducive to bisexuality? Fourth, do women and men differ with regard to the first three questions?

DAVID SMITH

In investigating the complexities of choosing a label to describe one's sexuality, it was found that actual sexual activity doesn't necessarily bear any relation to the labels chosen. These seem to be randomly rejected, accepted or imposed for a wide variety of different reasons. And the relative importance of sexual attraction, sexual experiences, love and affection differed enormously from person to person.

Among the circumstances conducive to bisexuality, the study highlighted threesomes; ideological positions for example humanism, libertarianism and feminism; and sex with close friends. The latter seemed to be the most appropriate for women.

Two major differences between women's and men's reactions to bisexuality are highlighted. Women appear to be less likely than men to adopt a gay identity as a result of just a few homosexual experiences. But their first lesbian sexual experiences tended to be much less traumatic than first gay experiences for men, who were often concerned about the implications for their masculinity.

Those who took part in the study were students at the university and friends of friends among members of local bisexual groups. As as aside, Blumstein and Schwartz predicted a great increase in the size of the visible bisexual community. But this research is already a few years old and who knows when the suggestion for further work will be taken up.

Details of sources for this article are available from David Smith c/o LBG.

The impossible passion

La Batarde by Violette Leduc, Virago, £5.50, 469 pages.

Violette Leduc's autobiography is a story of obsession and selfishness.

From the pen of a man society would applaud the overcoming of illegitimate birth and the rise to the status of a great writer (a much more honoured state in France than in Britain) and forgive the awfulness of character so freely admitted to. Women are often expected to display greater depths of feeling,caring and consideration Here is a woman who doesn't. I like her. I would have enjoyed her single-mindedness had I known her.

Her journey through four major relationships to a single status takes its toll on her self image but does not leave one with the impression that she compromised. To list, as the book's cover does, the sex and predelictions of her various lovers would be to judge her by them.

Violette Leduc stands alone. She reports in a way that is compelling her endless list of selfish acts that cost her much in terms of losing love. She does not label herself as Bisexual, Lesbian or Homosexual so why should we.

"I came into the world and I vowed to entertain a passion for the impossible." And she did.

SUSAN WINTER

Pink facts 85

ANDREAS REDA

'Publicly to threaten, insult or bear hatred towards, persecute or hold in contempt a person or group of persons on the grounds of homosexual orientation and way of life' has been illegal in Norway since April 1981 - the first country to pass legislation specifically designed to remove discrimination against gay people in a society, where over 80% of respondents in a recent public attitude survey said they tolerated lesbian/gay relations.

And although the law has yet to be fully tested in the courts, particularly in view of antagonism from religious fundamentalists, the second part of this legislation refers to the refusal of sales of goods or the use of facilities for the same reasons, and here the Norwegian Gay Organisation DNF-48 (after the year of its foundation) has already successfully forced it's implementation in several instances.

And in Sweden, following a resolution by parliament calling for total acceptance of same-sex relationships, a commission representing all political parties was established to investigate ways of ending discrimination.

Detailed studies were carried out on the attitudes of the general public, of gay people themselves, and of institutionalized forms of discrimination. In their conclusions published last year specific remedies are suggested in the fields of public information as well as legislative initiatives, leading ultimately to a situation where sexual preference does not influence public opinion about the person concerned. Further research on related issues is now needed. Rather than open prejudice, it is the non-existence of homosexuality as a cultural institution which is to be tackled.

However, the IGA Pink Book 1985, publ. by COC-magazijn Amsterdam (192pp illustr. £4.95), which was made possible by financial assistance from the Department of Emancipation at the Dutch Ministry of Health and research assistance from Dutch and Swedish embassies, is not only valuable for it's in-depth articles on the situation in a number of countries, but also for it's individual country surveys of the legal, the actual legal, and the political situation, it's descriptions of the prevalent attitudes in those societies, short notes on The Movement, and it's lesbian and gay world maps. There is an appendix and a list of IGA member organizations.

The IGA, in it's introduction to this first Annual Report, notes the arbitrariness of the legal oppression and takes special account of the additional problems facing gay women, both as lesbians and as women, because they are either seen as not having a sexuality or their sexuality is considered to be of no interest to society. Sexuality can be liberating and subversive, and the threat it may present established state organisations with is shown in responses ranging from persecution and organized extermination to more subtle if hardly less devious forms of social control via cultural products - language, thought, 'science', those organs disseminating the philosophy of every human being falling in line in a society which has fallen in line with itself. Pressure groups concerned with human rights issues such as Amnesty must be persuaded to support the struggle for sexual self-determination by encompassing imprisonment for reasons of homosexuality under their definition of conscience, and pressure must also be brought to bear on politicians of international organizations, who may be less restricted by their countries given moral standards, to include sexual self-determination in their definition of human rights.

The Council of Europe, which drew up the European Convention of Human Rights in 1950, has endorsed the findings of a 1981 report on discrimination against homosexuals which included a recommendation that, in the light of discrimination and even oppression, 'all individuals ... should enjoy the right to sexual self-determination'.

An amendment by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe - delegates of national parliaments - that recommended the inclusion of 'sexual preference' in the European Convention was rejected.

The European Commission, the EEC's executive, was asked by the European Parliament in 1984 to 'abolish any laws..., to apply the same age of consent ..., to renew its efforts with regard to dismissals ..., to ensure that no cases of discrimination arise...' and to ask members to 'provide a list of all provisions in their legislation which concern homosexuals'. The Legal Affairs Committee is instructed to 'examine ... in what way differences between the laws ... constitute barriers ...' and indicate what measures should be applied for their removal.

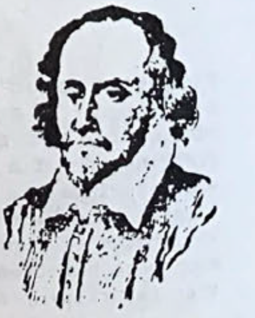
Resolutions and recommendations are not legally binding. But they nevertheless give rise to optimism by their recognition of the need for change and the fact that the majority of elected MEPs are now in favour of these changes.

The book proves its usefulness in three ways: It makes for very positive reading when you consider how far some countries have got towards a discrimination-free sexuality and this is encouraging for people in EC-member states with an out-dated morality such as Britain; it clarifies the state of the international struggle for sexual liberation; and it's a very factual holiday guide: whereas nude bathing may be tolerated on the islands if you are bringing in foreign currency, you may easily find yourself subject to raids, detention, interrogation and medical examinations if you are gay and actually live in Greece.

The Secretariat of IGA welcomes information on any of the fifty countries not yet fully documented.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET 20

A woman's face, with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion;
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false woman's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes, and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created;
Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,-
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.



Shakespeare.

The horned god

by John Rowan

As I and others have argued elsewhere(1), we all live in a system called Patriarchy, which is so destructive that it will kill us all unless we change.

Part of the change which is necessary is in the area of sex roles(2). Like other roles, these are narrowing and limiting(3) and in the case of men, often lethal (4). It is in men's best interest to change(5).

But this change, for men, is very difficult. Our alienation goes to the root(6) and we hardly have any non-patriarchal models to go on, which might give us clues as to what we need to change towards. We have a go-from, but we don't have a go-to.

Women have always been far more interested in questioning patriarchy than men have, and so we can look to them for some hints. And the main hint which I want to take up here is that we need to work on these issues at three levels: the conscious social level; the unconscious personal level; and the spiritual level.

At the conscious social level we first of all go in for consciousness-raising, and then go on to question patriarchy, where necessary and possible organising to overthrow, subvert, undermine or dismantle male chauvinism, sexism and patriarchy(7). This is the first and most obvious form of liberation.

At the unconscious personal level, we bring out into the open and examine our hidden attitudes, going right back into early life, towards men and women and how they are supposed to be. This has been called unconsciousness-raising(8), and it requires the sort of efforts which are undertaken in group therapy. Through this process we can become aware of how we are subject to the inner pressures of the self-hater(9), the Pig Parent(10) or the Patripsych(11). In the group we can deal with these monsters and transform their power into something better(12). This is the second form of liberation.

And at the spiritual level, we can open up the whole question of what archetypes, what deities, what teachers, what heroes we can use to inspire and guide us. Women have been doing this work for some time, with such extraordinary and challenging results as Judy Chicago's THE DINNER PARTY (13), Charlene Spretnak's THE POLITICS OF WOMENS SPIRITUALITY (14), Mary Daly's GYN/ECOLOGY (15), Pam McAllister's REWEAVING THE WEB OF LIFE (16), and Walker's THE WOMAN"S ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MYTHS AND SECRETS (17). Men have hardly begun this work, and so the present essay is a pioneering attempt to make a start at least.

The tradition of Wicca

The shock of recognition hit me when I came across Starhawk's THE SPIRAL DANCE (18). She describes herself as a feminist witch, and not only studies the ancient archetypes, but actually lives them out in rituals and ceremonies. And in these observances, in mixed covens, there is a place for the male.

It needs to be said, because of the widespread ignorance about all this stuff, that the type of witch craft we are talking about here is a Western tradition usually called Wicca. This is a pagan form of worship, centring on a Goddess, who can take many forms, but at least the three persons known as the

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Notes

1. A very brief rundown on this would have to include at least the following: John Rowan, 'Patriarchy: What it is and why some men question it', Self & Society, Vol 8 No 7, 1980. Elizabeth Dodson Gray Patriarchy is a conceptual trap, Roundtable Press 1982, Monica Sjöö & Barbara Mor The Ancient religion of the great cosmic mother of all, Rainbow Press 1981. Brian Easlea Fathering the unthinkable: Masculinity, scientists and the nuclear arms race, Pluto Press 1983.

2. I did a talk on this at the Festival of Mind, Body & Spirit at Olympia in 1983. It is available on casette from Soundline, and may be transcribed one day. It is entitled Sex roles: The great transformation. See also Philip Hodson Men..., Ariel Books 1984, and various issues of the magazine Achilles Heel.

3. There is a chapter on this in my book Ordinary ecstacy (RKP 1976) and another one in my other book which came out that same year from Davis-Poynter, The power of the group.

4. Sidney Jourard, 'Some lethal aspects of the male role', in Joe Pleck & Jack Sawyer (eds) Men and Masculinity, Prentice-Hall 1974. There's also some good material on this in the new Philip Hodson book already mentioned in note 2.

5. See my Self & Society article mentioned in note 1, and also Warren Farrell The liberated man, Bantam 1975.

6. As discussed so brilliantly in Ronnie Lang's book The politics of Experience, Penguin 1967.

7. A very useful division into three levels of increasing depth and complexity, as originally outlined by Daniel Cohen in an Alternative Socialism newsletter.

8. Phrase used in Ernst & Goodinson In our own hands, Women's Press 1981.

9. Phrase used by Doris Lessing in The four-gated city (Bantam 1970), and used powerfully by Starhawk in Dreaming the dark: Magic, sex and politics, Beacon Press 1982.

10. Term used by Southgate & Randall in The barefoot psychoanalyst (2nd ed) AKHPC 1978. And see my discussion of this whole area in The reality game, RKP 1983.

11. Term used by Southgate and Randall in The barefoot psychoanalyst (2nd ed.) AKHPC 1978. And see my discussion of this whole area in The reality game, RKP 1983.

12. This process is most clearly explained in Alvin Mahrer's excellent book Experiencing: A humanistic theory of psychology and psychiatry, Brunner/Mazel 1978.

13. Judy Chigago The dinner party, Anchor Books 1980. There is also a companion volume Embroidering our heritage: the dinner party needlework, which is very fine.

14. Charlene Spretnak (ed) The politics of woman's spirituality, Anchor Books 1982.

15. Mary Daly Gyn/Ecology Beacon Press 1978.

16. Pam McAllister (ed) Reweaving the web of lift: Feminism and nonviolence, New Society Publishers 1982.

17. Barbara G. Walker The Woman's Encyclopaedia of myths and secrets, Harper & Row 1983.

18. Starhawk The spiral dance: A rebirth of the acient religion of the Great Goddess, Harper & Row, 1978.

The horned god

Maid, the Mother and the Hag (19), corresponding to the waxing, the full and the waning moon.

The male figure compatible with the Goddess is the Horned God. And the image of the male which comes out of this archetypal figure is very different from any of the usual pictures of masculinity in our culture. As Gary Lingen says (20):

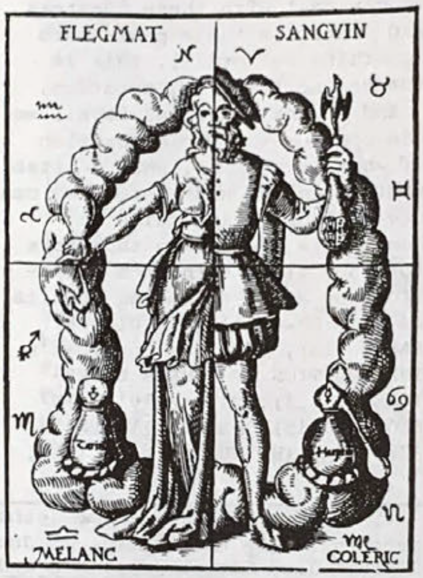
> The Horned One represents powerful positive male qualities which derive from deep natural sources within us rather than the stereotypes and violence and emotional crippling which has affected almost all the men and boys within our society.

For example, in our usual way of thinking, men are strong. This means being well-armoured and invulnerable. For a man to become vulnerable would mean to take off the armour and hence to be weak and feminine. It would have to be one or the other - either strong or vulnerable. But the Horned God is strong and vulnerable at the same time. He is not afraid to die because he knows he will be reborn. He is the Lord of Death and Rebirth.

Again, in our usual way of thinking, a man's mind has to be in charge of his body. If his body takes over, he becomes lazy, or hurtful, or lustful or gluttonous, and so the mind has to come in for discipline and control. But the Horned God is the Undivided Self, in which mind is not split from body, nor spirit from flesh. There is a wholeness there, which means that we can now act spontaneously and adequately at the same time.

The ordinary way of thinking holds that men are steady and dependable. Men should stick to one thing, and their word should be unchanging. But the Horned God is all about change. He is Lord of the Dance, and together with the Goddess symbolises the spiral dance of life. He brings personal change and social change. He shows us the madness in the tasks of the same world of every day. He presents us with a sense of being at the edges, the borderlines, so that we can't tell whether he is mad or sane, businessman or artist, bourgeois or revolutionary, poet or printer, wild or sober, sexual or psychic, conscious or unconscious.

And the standard way of thinking about men is to say that they must be continuously male. If they drop their masculinity even once, and become female even in one way, they are labelled feminine forever, and never respected in the same way. But the Horned God has complete freedom in this respect. As a shape-shifter, he can be male or female, essentially bisexual. As Lord of the Waters, he can go down into the collective unconscious and start to understand at a deep level what it is to menstruate, what it is to give birth, what it is to have a hole instead of a pole. Here he knows about durable weakness and unheroic strength (21).



These are concrete matters. They can be experienced in rituals where we get in touch with the powers of the Horned One. The faces of the god are found in personal experiences, and they say - "Look at this. Feel this. Know this within yourself and name its power so that you can draw it forth". This is the new paganism. As Gary Lingen says:

> The Horned One is a positive model for male power - free from the patriarchy and all other authoritarian models - as he grows and passes through his changes during the wheel of the year, he remains in relationship to and not separate from the prime life and nurturing force - the Goddess.

The rituals of Wicca include both the male and female together. When we talk about the Horned God, people often wonder what kind of horn we are talking about. There are two main versions, one where it is stag's horns, and the other where it is bull's horns. The stag horns are particularly sacred to Cernunnos, the great god of ancient Gaul, traces of whom can be found in many places of the British Isles. The bull horns are particularly sacred to Dionysus, the British version of whom is John Barleycorn. But there are many faces of the Horned God, and we could also mention Osiris, Tammuz (or Damuzi), Pan, Lugh, Robin and others. For many men, it seems that Pan is the most inspiring or accessible figure, as he was for Byron and Shelly. A man wrote to me - "I had a Pan experience at the Glastonbury Green Gathering. It didn't feel a particularly male experience, more an experience of goat/horse/merman/dog - of wholeness." Its relevance to him as a man was more as a door for entering into the realm of the Goddess, rather than as specifically an archetype of male power as such. This gives us an important clue, I think, because the essence of this whole approach is compatibility with, and complementarity to, the efforts of women in changing the system.

What is to be done

Are there any lessons or conclusions we can draw from this, except to study the Goddess and the Horned God, or to join a pagan group or a coven perhaps?

I think the essential thing is to know ourselves. "The big book is the self." We really look inside ourselves, and allow ourselves to get in touch with our deeper potentials, and listen to the messages from the depths, we shall find all those aspects of ourselves which have been suppressed and put away in their service of one of our

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20. Gary Lingen produces the Brothers of the Earth newsletter, PO Box 13158, Dinkytown Station, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414, USA.

19. There are many references on this including the marvellous Sjöö & Mor book mentioned in note 1, the Starhawk books and the enormous Walker book mentioned in note 17. See also Margot Adler Drawing down the moon: Witches, druids, Goddess-worshippers and other pagans in America today, Beacon Press 1979, an exciting account of what happened in the 1970s in the USA.

21. A lot of this material comes from Starhawk, but I also found very stimulating James Hillman The myth of analysis, Harper & Row 1978. This has a stunning essay on Dionysus, which I have made use of. For the actual rituals used in one British coven, see Janet & Stuart Farrar Eight sabbats for witches, Robert Hale 1981.

The horned god

false ideals. By reclaiming our hidden treasures we shall be able to accept, at a deep level, the infinitely large complexity of our nature.

The image of the Horned God is the image of a whole person, not ashamed or hung up or embarrassed at having been born male, not afraid of his own strength and dynamism, nor of his vulnerability and receptivity and stillness, not out to deny the truth of his flesh. As lover and son of the Goddess, he serves and respects her. It is an interesting fact that in Wicca the woman is held in higher esteem than the man. The High Priestess is more important than the High Priest in this pagan tradition. In fact, a meeting may be held without a High Priest being present, but could never be held without the High Priestess.

So women can relate to this version of the male without feeling that they are going to be oppressed or put down in a new way. And this may feel strange at first. As Starhawk says (22):

> (A man I respect) spoke of the need for images of Father Earth. At first I found the phrase jarring, almost offensive. It seemed the power of the father had raged on too long without being revived now, within the Goddess religion. But as I thought about it, as I allowed myself to experience the Earth-God - I realised that this image is indeed prevalent in the mythology of earth religion. Father Earth is the Green Man of the Craft, the God who is pictured crowned with leaves and twined with vines, the spirit of vegetation, growing things, the forest.

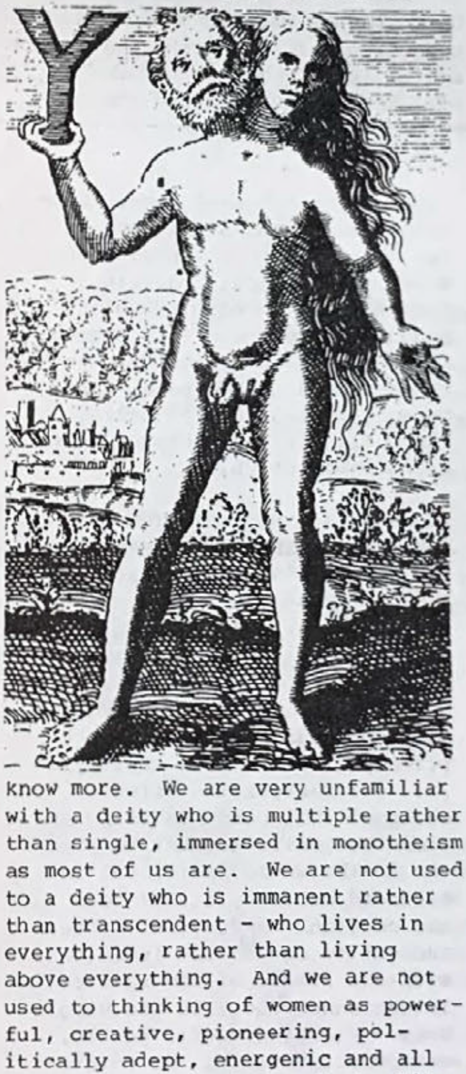
So it seems that the strangeness wears off after a while, and that both women and men can see the advantages of the new archetype.

A way forward

But of course the archetype of the Horned God is not new at all. It goes back to paleolithic times. For many thousands of years horns have been a sign of divinity, in many cultures all over the world. By putting ourselves in touch with this image, we are contacting something which has a long history, and an even longer prehistory.

What does it mean practically? Firstly, I think it means exploring ourselves and knowing ourselves. This is the work the feminists have done in their development,and it is what men also need to do. We need to ask questions about what we really are deep down underneath all the usual assumptions. This is not only consciousness-raising, it is also unconsciousness-raising, and Ernst & Goodison, in their excellent book for women (note 8), have taught us all the many means and methods which can be used to do this.

Secondly, it means acknowledging the power of the Goddess. We are so very ignorant, most of us, about the Goddess that there is much work to be done in simply getting to know more. We are very unfamiliar with a deity who is multiple rather than single, immersed in monotheism as most of us are. We are not used to a deity who is immanent rather than transcendent - who lives in everything, rather than living above everything. And we are not used to thinking of women as powerful, creative, pioneering, politically adept, energenic and all the rest - we need more books like Judy Chicago's The dinner party to show in dramatic form how the real history of women has been supressed, and set aside by male historians (see note 13). We don't know the Goddess, and we don't know women - for the most part we only know the versions handed down by men for the benefit of male power and overlordship. Now that women's own version is coming to light, we need to study it and overcome our shock at reading entries such as:



> Martia Proba (4th Century Britain). The English Common Law, Martia Proba, a Celtic queen. Perceiving the need for reform she developed the Martian Statutes which introduced trial by jury - a concept unknown to Roman Law - and incorporated ancient property laws which treated women and men equally. (The Dinner Party)

It seems that we need to revise our ideas about women before we can revise our ideas about men.

Thirdly, it means becoming aware of and being prepared to give up all that is regarded as masculine in our culture. We have to be prepared to question everything without exception. Only when we have genuinely cleared the ground in this way can we genuinely decide what to have back, what to choose for ourselves. This is similar to the ritual divestment suffered by those heroes who have entered the Underworld. We can cermonially divest ourselves of all that is masculine - not only the physical characteristics such as the beard the Adam's apple, the phallus, the testes, the hairy body and so on, but also male ways of thinking, talking and acting, feeling and being. Each thing we can conceive of as male can be set aside. The cermonies for doing this are deep and powerful, painful and challenging, but ultimately liberating. This is a scary area, which has been touched on by Gay men (23) and effeminists (24), but often without the spiritual insight which I think we need to do justice to this question. The analogy from psychotherapy is helpful here, I think. In therapy we deliberately let go of our lives: but we don't have to stay there. The very act of open-

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22. Dreaming the dark p. 87.

23. For example, Arthur Evans' fine book Witchcraft and the gay counterculture: Western civilization and some of the people it has tried to destroy, Fag Rag Books 1978.

24. 'The effeminist manifesto', in Jon Snodgrass (ed) A book of readings for men against sexism, Times Change Press 1977.

25. An interesting recent book in this area is Edward C. Whitmont Return of the Goddess, RKP 1983. Explains the whole idea of archetypes, and shows how men and women need several archetypes rather than just one. Also worth looking at is Margaret A. Murray The god of the witches, OUP 1970, which is good on the God but very weak on the Goddess. Also worth a look is Doreen Valiente Witchcraft for tommorrow, Robert Hale 1978.

The horned god

ing them up and entering into them transforms them, and we get back a new kind of control which is in better contact with reality. And of course this third point also entails working with the Goddess, actively exploring those aspects of ourselves which are usually regarded as female (25).

Fourthly, it means opening ourselves up to the image of the Horned God, learning what this archetype can offer us in the way of new inspiration and new possibilities. For example, in sex, the Horned God says something like: "Experience this pleasure, and know in your own body how it peaks and fades. Give way to it, not as performance of mastery, but as the deeper pleasure of giving way. You can develop the ability to merge, to let another being in as part of yourself, to flow around that being, to become ground as well as self." The penis, when it is no longer the instrument of control, becomes the emblem of vulnerability, of feeling. This gives sex a closeness and an intimacy which is quite different from the phallus-as-weapon model. This is not a new orthodoxy - simply some new ways to try out, some ideas to consider.

Fifthly, it means finding others who feel the same way, so that more and better rituals and ceremonies can be developed for cultivating the pagan vision of the Horned God as relating to the Great Goddess. Only in this way can we deepen and consolidate this understanding at a social level. The Horned God is all about connection and the exchange of energy; if we are to follow him we must connect with each other as well as with him. These rituals are being developed by pagan groups all over the place, and I have worked with others to work out some new ones to meet the specific concerns of this essay.

And sixthly, it is about continuing the search. The Horned God is also Lord of the Hunt, and today our hunt is for knowledge. We are all on a quest for the knowledge that will heal our planet and save it from the destructive power of the old masculinity. This fresh archetype symbolises and sparks the creative process by which we make new discoveries, by which we find the Holy Grail.

John Rowan

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Alice's garden

IN SEARCH OF OUR MOTHERS' GARDENS: WOMANIST PROSE, by Alice Walker, published by The Womens' Press, £4.95

Alice Walker's latest book is a collection of essays, reviews and articles written over the last fifteen years. The pieces deal with art, with being black, with being female, and with the rediscovery of black writers. There is a retrospective view of the Civil Rights movement and the account of a visit to the 'new Cuba'.

The opening pages give a definition of the term 'womanist'. 'A black feminist or a feminist of colour... A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counter-balance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health...'

Meanwhile Alice Walker's THE COLOR PURPLE continues to sell millions of copies around the world. It is being translated into many different languages. And the story is soon to be made into a film - by Steven Spielberg.

Women's lit

WOMEN: A WORLD REPORT (Methuen £4.95) is a collection of essays, facts and figures - an examination of the lives of women throughout the world at the end of the United Nations' Decade for Women. Anita Desai, Marylin French, Jill Tweedie, Nawal el Saadawi, Germaine Greer, Angela Davis and others contribute and the articles cover India, Cuba, Norway, Australia, Indonesia, the U.K., the U.S., Kenya, Egypt and the Soviet Union.

ALONE OF ALL HER SEX: THE MYTH AND CULT OF THE VIRGIN MARY (Picador £3.95) Marina Warner's book is staggering. It's an exhaustive study of how the changing face of the Virgin Mary reflects the status of women in Christian society. "The Virgin Mary is a manifestation of the principle the Chinese call 'yin' .... But whereas the Orient realised that both masculine and feminine qualities must be present in the whole individual in balanced measure, it has been the constant tendency of Western thought to equate the feminine with the female of the species." If men cannot be like the Virgin Mary - yielding, soft, gentle, receptive, merciful and tolerant - what's left?

MAGIC MOMMAS, TREMBLING SISTERS, PURITANS AND PERVERTS (New York import £5.95) by Joanna Russ Six feminist essays by science fiction writer and novelist, Joanna Russ, author of THE FEMALE MAN and ON STRIKE AGAINST GOD: A LESBIAN LOVE STORY. Russ deals with the issues of sex and pornography in a very personal way; her own experience may contradict what many others see as the 'correct line'.

THE DAUGHTERS OF EGALIA by Gerd Brantenberg (Journeyman £4.95) A fantasy novel from Norway selling very well all over London in which wim hold sway over the feeble menwim whose chances of combatting discrimination and disadvantage are to say the least pretty slim.

SEX VARIANT WOMEN IN LITERATURE by Jeanette H. Foster (Naiad Press £7.95) Bisexual and lesbian writers of the last 2,600 years, their lives, their books and the struggles they've had to get them published.

Best bi's

The London Bisexual Group has recently produced a list of books about bisexuality and bisexuals.

It includes novels by Gore Vidal, Ursula Leguin and Marge Piercy. Biographies of Colette, Somerset Maugham and Oscar Wilde. Books about women's sexuality. And of course the various studies of bisexuality which feature profiles of bisexual men and women.

Other famous names which appear on the list are D.H.Lawrence (born 100 years ago, September 11th 1885), Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, Mary Renault, Alexander the Great, Alice Walker, Ernest Hemingway, James Baldwin, Tennessee Williams, Lytton Strachey and Lord Byron.

Copies of the book list are available in exchange for two first class stamps to cover postage and printing costs.

POETRY

1980s POEM

NuNuNuNuh
its hard
and underneath the fear
the music in the discos is hard
the faces in the SS office hard
the striking miners are hard
the police are hard
NuNuNuNuh
its hard to see the end of the slump
its hard to outwit a computer
its hard to love this thatcher
NuNuNuNuh
its hard
hard videos turn TV into a hot medium
hard shadows fall in adult cartoons
hard shoulders
you mustnt cry on them
its all hard
NuNuNuNuh
criminals used to be soft compared with this lot
governments were soft beside these
its official and the unofficial terror compete
its all too hard
NuNuNuNuh
the cookie doesnt crumble any more
its hard in the mouth
the milk of human kindness is all skimmed now
the ball you kicked yesterday has turned to flame
NuNuNuNuh
predicting the future is hard
and underneath the fear

John Rowan

COMING OUT

Shall I shout it from the roof-tops?
Shall I stand in the pub on a Saturday night
And tell the bored, embarrased faces:
"I am gay," "I have slept with a woman"
(I have curled up warm and close
with another female body,
I have touched her, felt her so-soft skin,
felt her fingers on me)?
Is it so earth-shaking?

The first time I slept with a man
I did not get up and announce it.
Did I change? Of course:
But I change all the time;
And only those close to me may know the reasons,
And only those close to me care.

But I would like you to know when you meet me
That there are no barriers between us,
Unless they are caused by our fear and suspicion.
Last month I wrote it on a Christmas card
And my long-standing friend
Rand up from America to say:
"You too!"

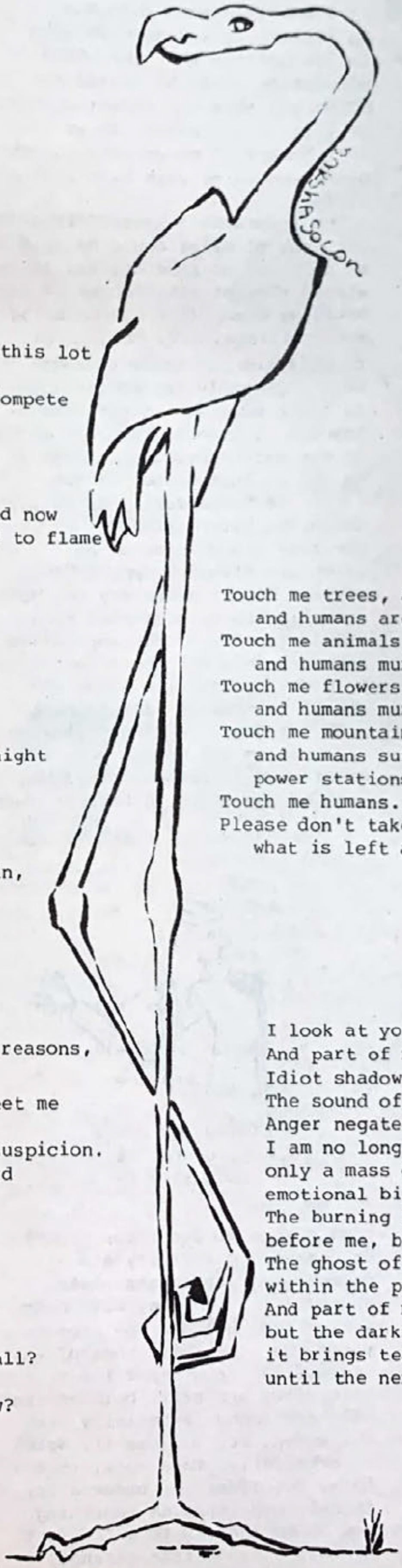
What would you like me to say?

Shall I write it in a manifesto
Or a letter to my mother?
Shall I wear a badge or write it on a wall?
Or will I only hold it in my eyes
And tell you if you seem to want to know?

It will be there on meeting:
Here I am, unashamed.

I am different from many.
I am different from all.
Hallo!

Al



It All Began With....
Her
sleeping
on our couch
alone
and us
rather me
with warmth
to give
in the room next door.
He said he was tired.
And I dreamt her
in the shower, in the garden,
in my arms.

Clumsily, desire,
freed itself,
freed me
to love her.
Without
him.

Ellen Weissbuch

Touch me trees, although I am human
and humans are murdering you with pollution,
Touch me animals, although I am a human
and humans murder you for food.
Touch me flowers, although I am a human
and humans murder you to brighten up a dull room.
Touch me mountains, although I am a human
and humans suffocate you with buildings and
power stations.
Touch me humans...... for I am human also.
Please don't take away and suffocate
what is left and is ours to share.

Sarah McGh

I look at you all with Darkness in my eyes
And part of me no longer cares.
Idiot shadows containing deeper pains
The sound of my own sadness drowns out all else
Anger negates warmth
I am no longer me
only a mass of memory, substance of times past
emotional bile within me rises
The burning in my belly my link with reality
before me, beyond me behind me, around me
The ghost of a thousand times past speak and mor
within the private cinema of my mind.
And part of me no longer cares
but the darkness burns
it brings tears to kill it
until the next time.

Peter Evans

Burning their bridges

It is with an unbounded sense of irony that we note that the silent section of the population known previously as bisexuals have found a new identity. We are the Bridging Group. The ones who will be responsible for the transmission of AIDS to the heterosexual community. This news comes to us from the London Weekend Television programme 'Weekend World' shown on Sunday 29 September.

It is absolutely essential that the heterosexual community does not alienate the Bisexual and Gay community in it's coverage of AIDS. By doing so it may burn it's bridges. As Robin Weiss, director of the Institute of Cancer Reasearch said (if we can develop a vaccine) "Who are we going to test it on?"

If you paid very careful attention to the programme it was possible to separate facts, likelihoods and possibilities from pure conjecture and wild fantasy. But you had to pay very careful attention.

The idea that AIDS will be more common amongst heterosexuals (because there are more of them) than homosexuals, in 10 to 15 years time: that tens of thousands will be suffering from it was followed by a plea to the Minister of Health, Barney Hayhoe, who was in the studio in person, that the government should spend £10 million per annum now rather than £400 million per annum if this likelihood becomes fact. Though thoroughly laudable a plea this may be in itself, it was muddled with the suggestion that the whole population could be tested for HTLV3 and that the infected should be kept in isolation. Do we hear the concept of concentration camps being spoken of with calm rationality.

The programme mentioned that 50 per cent of males could be said to be bisexual to some degree. It stated that of all members of the Bridging Group (the others being Haemophiliacs, I.V. drug users, prostitutes and their clients) we are probably the most difficult to track down due to our unwillingness to even mention our habits to our heterosexual partners. If we add to this number of 50% exclusive homosexuals, do we find exclusive heterosexuality a minority group? Have we as bisexuals always suspected that anyway? Was it necessary for homosexuality to be presented as a small minority of the population and therefore not too threatening in order to gain the legal and social reforms of recent years?

The emphasis on promiscuity as the problem and monogamy as the solution was disappointing. Not a hint of any state in between these conditions nor a suggestion that a more open and honest approach to our common need for and enjoyment of sexual intimacy could lead us to look for and find safer ways. In fact safe sex was not mentioned.

A considerable amount of time was devoted to the fact that HTLV3 can be transmitted heterosexualy. I have always presumed that a female is at the same degree of risk from a male partner who is HTLV3 positive at that man's male partners are. The question arose is a man at risk from a woman. (The question is a woman at risk from another woman did not arise.) Out of 133 people who have contracted the disease in the US, heterosexualy, 118 were women who caught it from men. But what of the remaining 15. I wonder if anyone asked them what they do in bed (or don't you ask heterosexuals that?). We should remember that heterosexual anal intercourse is illegal in many states in America.

As a means of persuading heterosexuals and Health Ministers to take AIDS (and bisexuals) more seriously this may have been a useful programme. But it's slick and fast method of presentation leaves one with the wish that they had stuck to facts and not clouded the issue with moral rhetoric and dubious speculation.

DAVID BURKLE & SUSAN WINTER

Frame it

FRAMED YOUTH is a video made in 1981 by a group of 'Lesbians and Gay Men' about being young and coming out. It was shown at the Bisexual Conference in Brighton where more than one person found that 'it was funny, witty and clever' but that 'even in its satirical look at some of the heterosexual myths, it seemed too attacking', making bisexual people feel insecure and embarassed about the heterosexual part of their make-up.

Alan Reid, co-ordinator of the September in the Pink Festival of Lesbian and Gay Arts which funded this video, offers the following thoughts.

"Firstly let us not cavil; for dykes and faggots in that period it was an extremely important and positive piece. However, it now only has relevance as an archive document or as the first evidence of Jimi Somerville's voice in 'Screaming' or the collective powers of various directors including Connie Giannaris and Jeff Cole. As far as I remember (not having seen it for three years) it demands pecificity and decisivene about sexuality, which in i time may have been asking too uch and now appears dated. De e this, some of the 'verité' ences and the interviews are still both moving and very funny, especially from the women. Try to see it. Watch it critically. Take note, that to my recollection, bisexuality is only mentioned as something you do on the way to a 'perfect sexuality'. But take strength from its spirit."

"Nothing you could say, could take me away from Bi-guy....."

Stage 85

To mark the 10th anniversary of GAY SWEATSHOP, the Drill Hall is hosting three weeks of Lesbian and Gay Theatre, Poetry, Music and Dance. The core of the festival will be platform performances of new plays specially written for the occasion. Also included are performances by two groups from the U.S.A. not seen here before and evenings devoted to the work of Black writers and poets. Gay Sweatshop's new all-women touring group will present RAISING THE WRECK and there'll be cabaret and poetry in the bar. The season runs from Tuesday October 15 till Saturday November 2.

And to complete the autumn programme SIREN, an all-women theatre company, presents PULP, a lesbian Thriller. Integral to the group's style is the use of a wide variety of contemporary musical styles and a multi-instrument line up. Espionage, political intrigue and personal crisis..."a seedy tale told on seedy paper."

INFORMATION

Edinburgh conference

BISEXUALITY & THE POLITICS OF SEX

When........October 20, 21, 22.
Place.......The Societies Centre, 60 The Pleasance, Edinburgh. (disabled access - OK)
Time........Friday 7-11pm for social and to arrange accommodation
Saturday 10.30am to 5.30pm
Sunday 10.30am to 5.30pm
Fee.........unwaged - 75p
waged - £2 (plus £1 for each £1,000 earned over £2,000)

Accomodation is available. Please assist by booking in advance.

Creche.......available on request.
Food.........available near the Centre.
Coach Travel.From Birmingham - £22.50
Liverpool - £14.50
London - £20.00
Workshops....Sex, sexism, heterosexuality, power and privilege; Sex and power; Feminism and Bisexuality (women only); Varieties of feminism (women only); Heterosexuality; Isolation; Building local groups; Working in the Lesbian & Gay Community; Bisexuals in the media; Non-monogamy; What is Bisexuality?; What is sexuality?; Bisexuality and the Sexual Fringe; Lesbian & Gay Friends of Bisexuals; Polymorphous Perversity.
Registration and further information:
Kate Fearnley or Step Holdsworth
c/o Edinburgh Bisexual Group,
Lesbian & Gay Community Centre,
58A Broughton Street,
Edinburgh EH1 3SA
telephone: 031 556 0497

What is polymorphous perversity?

The FEMINIST LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTRE works to provide information facilities on subjects of importance to women and the women's movement. They possess many facilities including a newsletter every two months. The library is open to non-subscribers but membership is necessary to borrow books. Subscriptions vary according to income (between £1 and £12). Write to Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, Londom WC2 6PA. Tel. 01-930-0715

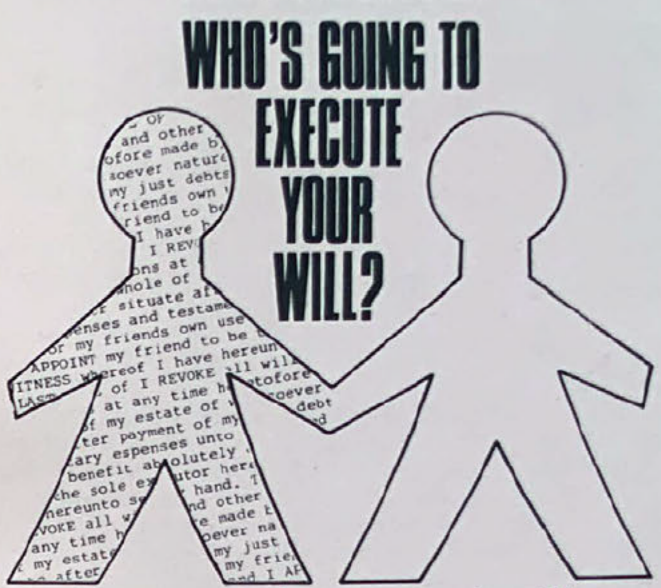
The MEN'S ANTI-SEXIST NEWSLETTER (now hugely improved in quality) exists as a forum for exchange of news, ideas, thoughts, feelings and information for men who are challenging sexism and particularly for people who wish to find for men alternative roles to those which society casts for them.
Single issue by post 80p
6 issue subscription £4.20
contact M.A.N., 60 Rhymney Street, Cathays, CARDIFF.

SIGMA - a support organisation for the straight partner in relationships where one partner is gay or bisexual. Contact via Gay Switchboard (tel (01) 837-7324).

GAY'S THE WORD Bookshop, 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1, which is open Sundays 2-6pm.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:
GAY SWITCHBOARD - (01) 837-7324
TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST - (01) 833-2971
7pm - 10pm daily.

GAY AND A COUPLE?



Gay women and men must make wills and should name their partner as the executor

GAY BEREAVEMENT PROJECT

The very recently bereaved should contact Gay switchboard on 01-837 7324

LONDON TELEPHONE CONTACTS

LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP	David Burkle	(01) 340-5729
	David Smith	(01) 359-4463
BISEXUAL WOMEN'S GROUP	Diana	(01) 223-6895

BRITISH CONTACTS

LONDON BISEXUAL GROUP, BM BI, London WC1N.
LONDON WOMEN'S BISEXUAL GROUP, BM BI, London WCJN.
BRIGHTON BISEXUAL ACTION NETWORK, B.A.N., c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.
EDINBURGH BISEXUAL GROUP, c/o Lesbian and Gay Community Centre, 58A Broughton Street, Edinburgh EH1 3SA.
RADICAL LESBIAN/GAY-IDENTIFIED BISEXUAL NETWORK, c/o Pink Dandelion, 36 Mackie Ave, Brighton BN1 8RA
BISEXUAL AND MARRIED GAYS SUPPORT GROUP, 66A Church Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, E.Sussex, TN37 6EE. telephone (0424) 435931

FOREIGN CONTACTS

USA: BOSTON BISEXUAL WOMEN'S NETWORK, P.O.Box 1534, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, USA.
SAN FRANSISCO BISEXUAL CENTER, 1757 Hayes St., San Fransisco,CA 94117, USA.
CHICAGO BI-WAYS, P.O.Box A333Q, Chicago, Illinois 60690, USA.
MELIS ALLIANCE, P.O.Box 4755, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19137, USA.
GERMANY: INITIATIVE BISEXUELLER FRAUEN UND MANNER
NORTH - Claudia Quintern, Fröbelweg 7, 3400 Göttingen.
WESTFALIA - Klaus D. Hameister, Am Sudholz 58, 4800 Bielefeld 1.
NORTH RHINE & THE SOUTH - Francis Hüsers, Aachenerstrasse 214, 4050 Mönchengladbach 1.
RHINE-MAIN-LAHN AREA - Erika Köcher, Am Niddatal 31, 6000 Frankfurt 90 and Ellen Svoboda, Bahnhofstrasse 71, 6300 Giessen.
and H. Bruns-Potthoff, Bleichstrasse 35, 4900 Herford, W. Germany.
HOLLAND: BI-CLUB, P.O.Box 797, 2003 RT Haarlem, Holland.

LBG Diary

OCTOBER

Monday 7	MICHAEL BROWN, author, talking about androgyny from Ancient Greece to the present day.
Monday 14	STEPHANIE NORRIS, co-editor and author of OUT IN THE OPEN: PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT BEING GAY AND BISEXUAL talks about how the book came about.
Monday 21	LONDON FRIEND'S Transvestite and Transexual Group's Yvonne provides a lively evening.
Monday 28	SOCIAL EVENING. Come and have a drink and catch up on the gossip. Newcomers specially welcome.

NOVEMBER

Monday 4	MASSAGE WORKSHOP led by Arthur Perkins.
Monday 11	TONY WHITEHEAD of the Terrence Higgins Trust and one of the new women workers talking about AIDS and the increased involvement of bisexuals in the Trust.
Monday 18	SAFER SEX for men and women.
Monday 25	GAY SWITCHBOARD'S Jim Herrick.

DECEMBER

Monday 2	GAY BEREAVEMENT PROJECT'S Bernard Williams and Dudley Cave talking about how they help gay and bisexual people to prepare for and cope with the death of a partner.
Monday 9	ELLEN WEISSBUCH, recently returned from the U.S. West Coast, on the thriving bisexual 'scene' in the States.
Monday 16	CHRISTMAS PARTY - FANCY DRESS. Come as you please, come as your fantasy, come as you really are.
Monday 23	No formal meeting, but everyone spending Christmas in London welcome to 'party'.
Monday 30	As Monday 23.

JANUARY

Monday 6	KRIS KIRK, gay journalist and author of MEN IN FROCKS.

RIP
Rock Hudson

Goodbye
and
Thankyou

Silent sacrifice

by David Smith

1985 has been a year of progress for the world-wide bisexual community. As the London Bisexual Group celebrates its fourth birthday, other groups are springing up all over the world. And this year must hold the record for the number of bisexual conferences. The lesbian and gay community is cautiously opening doors, as the all-embracing concept of 'the sexual fringe' gains acceptance.

And yet sixty-seven percent of the population disapprove of bisexuality, and this is not likely to be changed by doctors warning the public that bisexuals will be the people to spread AIDS to the 'population at large'. As if we weren't part of that population.

In comparison to the lesbian and gay movement, the bisexual community is minute and in less of a position to cope with the potential crisis of homophobic reaction to AIDS. There are only five bisexual support/social groups in the whole of Britain none of which have their own premises or facilities. None receive any funding from central or local government. Apart from weekly meetings in The Fallen Angel, the London Bisexual Group has to fulfil the function of information and counselling service, lobbying body and advice centre. It organises conferences, sponsors BI-MONTHLY and supports all of the other bisexual groups in the country. It survives financially entirely through donations from people who attend group meetings and it relies solely on volunteers to do the work.

The discrepancy between the relative sizes of the bisexual and gay communities exists perhaps only as a result of confusion over labels. Many gay-identified bisexuals make use of the current facilities of the gay scene and in innumerable cases contribute constructively to the movement. Open declaration of bisexuality in such situations brings unpredictable reactions. But the consistent minimising of bisexuality in books and periodicals by for and about lesbians and gay men cannot simply be explained as a result of confusion.

The cry of 'conspiracy of silence' is not an empty challenge. Why are there so few books about bisexuality? Why does the British Library have only three entries under 'bisexuality' in its catalogue? How can a book entitled SEXUALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS written by gay historian and theorist Jeffrey Weeks have only four references to bisexuality? Has bisexuality been sacrificed on the altar of law reform?

BI-MONTHLY is stark living proof of the silence. It is the only magazine aimed specifically at bisexuals in the whole of Europe. And in the current uncertain climate it has a very important role to play in informing, entertaining and supporting the bisexual community and an even wider role in educating society about our very existence.

Like everything else in the bisexual community BI-MONTHLY is unsubsidised. This issue was the work of a very small team of people, most of whom were learning skills on the job. But to fulfil our role seriously and adequately we need the help of many more people to send us accounts of their own personal experiences; to write about films, television, video, books, theatre, poetry and the visual arts. We want small pieces of news, major features and illustrations. We need people to scan the other publications they read for news, controversy and praise. People to keep us informed.

After all the changes to the magazine in the last few months we feel we are nearing a standard which will get bisexual people noticed.

We now demand an end to the conspiracy of silence.